

Filed for intro on 04/02/2001

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 152  
By McNally

A RESOLUTION To recognize Coal Creek Mark the Trail Day and  
to recognize the history of the Coal Creek  
Watershed.

WHEREAS, The Coal Creek Watershed embraces the communities of Lake City  
(originally called Coal Creek), Beech Grove, Fraterville and Briceville in Anderson County; this  
area contained some of the rich coal seams that furnished fuel for the railroads and industries  
that developed in the years following Reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, The miners in the Coal Creek area, along with those in Grundy County,  
were responsible for the repeal of the infamous law permitting the leasing of convict labor to  
mining operations; the act was abused by mine owners who used it against striking miners; and

WHEREAS, The miners finally rebelled, burning down stockades where convict miners  
were housed; in 1892, the militia was called in to suppress the rebellion, and in pitched battles  
over 500 miners were arrested and 27 killed. A national public outcry hastened Tennessee's  
repeal of the convict leasing law and led to the creation of the Federal Bureau of Mines; and

SJR0152

00506656

WHEREAS, Mine safety and working conditions continued to be an issue during the first decade of the Twentieth Century, and on May 19, 1902 some 214 miners, men and boys, died in a mine explosion at Fraterville; official records listed 184 dead, the difference being unnamed transient miners who were never identified; and

WHEREAS, The disaster left 150 widows and nearly 1000 orphans, and constituted the worst mining disaster in the history of mining in the southern United States; it was followed some nine years later by the Cross Mountain disaster at Briceville in which 84 miners died; and

WHEREAS, Many of the mine explosion victims are buried in the Briceville, Fraterville Itinerant, Welsh (Welch), Leach, Longfield, Wilson, and Pleasant Hill Cemeteries; some left poignant letters to family members before succumbing to noxious gases while trapped underground; and

WHEREAS, The descendants and other residents of the watershed have not forgotten the sacrifices of those early miners. The Coal Creek Watershed Foundation, Inc. will be hosting a series of commemorative events, including: Coal Creek Mark the Trail Day on April 28, 2001 in which volunteers will help mark the Coal Creek Motor Discovery Trail and beautify some of the stops; field trips by the Briceville School Fifth Grade to explore the history of the Coal Creek Watershed on May 11, 2001; and the Historic Fraterville Mine Disaster Field Trip 2001 bus tour to mark the 99th anniversary of the disaster; and

WHEREAS, It is appropriate that this legislative body should recognize the communities of this State which have worked to preserve their local history as well as the natural beauty of the area; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, That the members of this General Assembly should recognize everyone affiliated with the Coal Creek Watershed Foundation, Inc., who have diligently worked to

commemorate the turbulent history of that region and its impact upon the mining industry within Tennessee and the United States.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That we wish the members of the Coal Creek Watershed Foundation, Inc. and the people of Anderson County every success for their planned commemorative events for 2001 and in the years to come.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.